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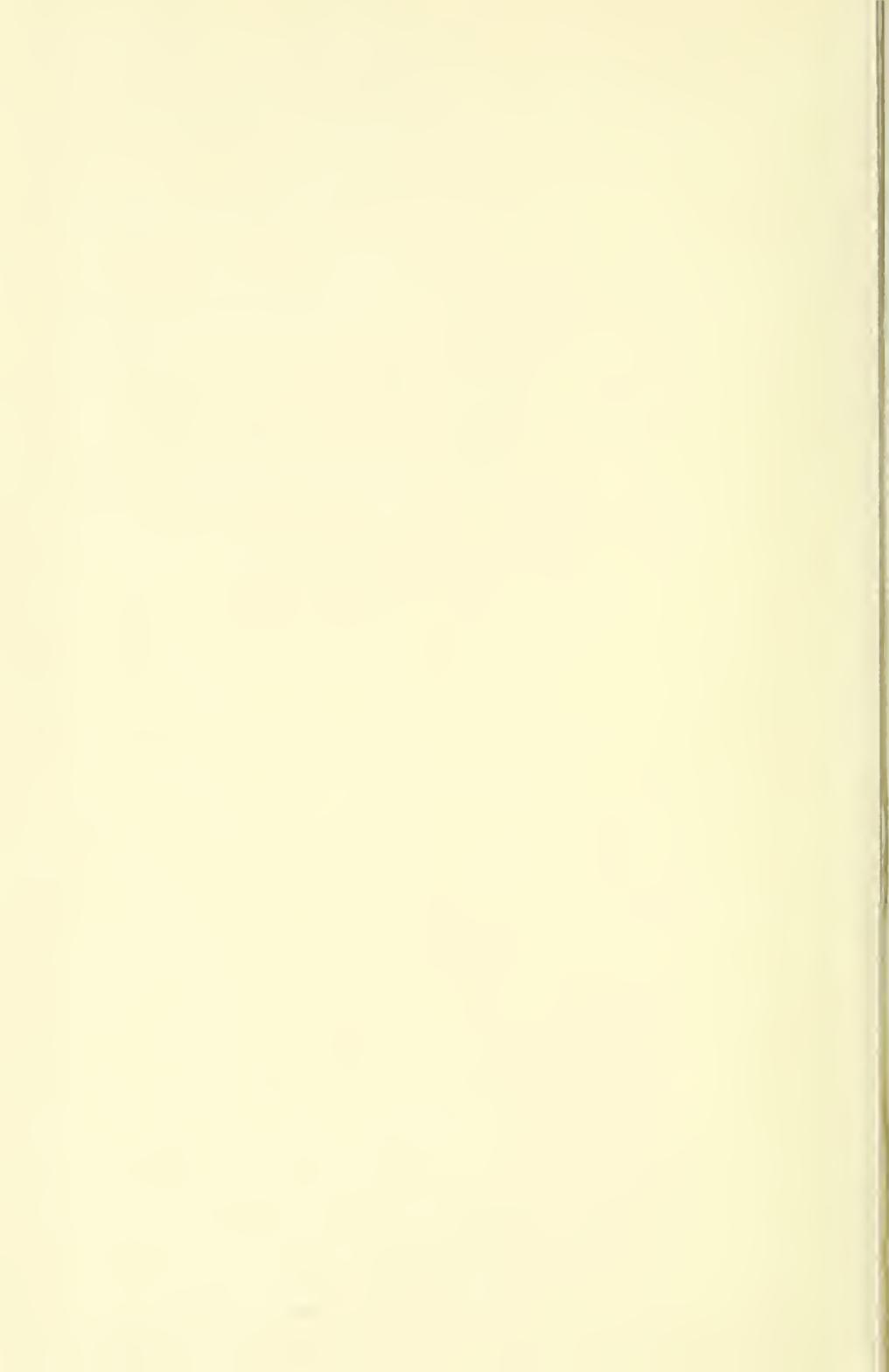
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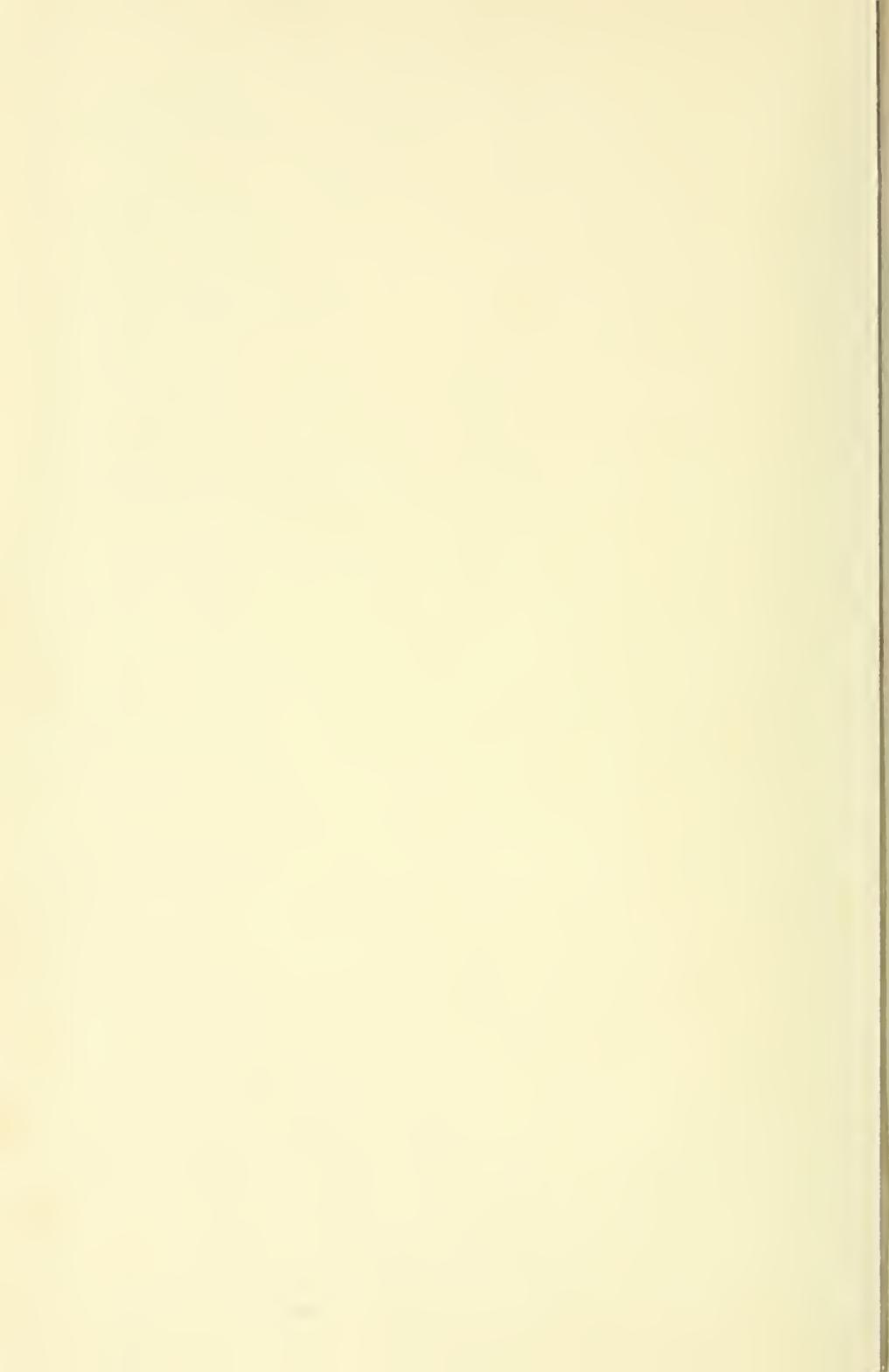












VAIN BOASTINGS  
OF  
FRENCHMEN.

THE SAME IN  
1386 *as in 1798.*

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BEING AN  
ACCOUNT OF THE THREATENED  
INVASION OF ENGLAND

BY THE  
FRENCH  
The 10th Year of King Richard II.

EXTRACTED FROM ANCIENT CHRONICLES.

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OF THE GRETE APPAREL OF SHIPPS  
 THE FRENCHMEN MADE TO PASSE  
 INTO ENGLAND TENTH YEAR OF  
 RICHARD II.

THE yong French king Charles, and his uncle the duke of Burgoyn, and constable of Fraunce, had great desyre and affection to go with an army into England, and all knighthes and squires of Fraunce did very well agree thereunto, saying, why should not we once go into Englande to see the countrie, and to learm the pathes of the same, as they have done in Fraunce? So that forthwith great provision and furnyture for that voyage was made in Fraunce on all sydes, and taxes and tallages set and assessed upon the cities, townes, and burgesles of the same, and in the plaine countries, that in an hundreth yere before there had beene none such seene nor heard of. And also great provision made by sea all the sommer tyme untill the moneth of September, they did nothing else, but grinde corne, and bake bisket, and at Tornay, Lisle, Doway, Arras, Amiens, Bethine, Saint Omers, and in all the townes about Scluse, they were occupied to lyke purpose.

pose\*. For the Frenche king, by the advise of his counsaile, purposed to take the sea at Scluse, and so to enter England, and to destroy the same. They that were riche men in the realme of Fraunce to the ayde and furniture of this voyage, were taxed and seased at the thirde penny and fourth parte of their goodes, and many payd more than they were worth besides. And from Spain, and from the port of Civile to Pruse, there was no great ship on the sea that the Frenchmen could lay theyr handes upon neyther any ship that was under their obeysance, but they were reteyned for the French king. And his men, and his other provision came from all partes and arryved in Flaundrys, both wyne, salt, fleshe, fishe, otes, hay, onyons, bisket, flower, egges in pipes, and all manner of thinges that could be devyfed, so that the provision was so great as it could not be beleved of any, but of such as sawe it. Befydes this, lordes, knightes, esquires, and men of warre, were written unto, and desyred to come and serve the French king in this journey, out of Savoy, Almaine, and from the sonne goyng downe to the lande of the erle of Arminack. And so these lordes of farre countries, as the earle of Savoye was retayned with 500 speares. Also the earle of

\* The Frenchmen never shewed more vanitie than they did this year, since the linage of Capetes began first to rule in France. All the ships that they coulde provide from the confines of Spaine, unto the mouth of the Rhine, all along the coast, they assembed at Sluis. Holinshed.

Arminack,

Arminack, and the Dolphyn of Annerency, though they were of farre countries, yet they made their provisions so great and costly, that it was a great marveyle to thinke thereof: And it was a wonder to consider from whence such provision came, what by land, and what by sea, into Flaundrys, as to Bruges, to Dan, and to Scluse. Also there was sent for into Holland, Zeland, Middlebourgh, Zirickzee, Dordright, Stonehove, and to all other townes on the sea-coast, and to the rivers enteryng into the sea, for all manner of shippes that could do any service, and all were brought to Scluce. *But the Hollanders and Zelanders sayd to them that retayned them, if ye will have our service, pay us our wages chearly, or else we will not go to any porte, and so they were payde, wherein they did wisely.* And (sayth Froyssart) I thinke that sithen the creation of the worlde, there was never sene together so many great shippes as were at the tyme at Scluse, and at Blanquerge: for, in the moneth of September, in the sayde yere, they were numbred to be 1287 shippes at Scluse: and their mastes seemed in the sea lyke a great wood or forest. And the Constable of Fraunce, his ship, was apparyled and furnished at Lenterginer in Briteyn. Also the Constable of Fraunce caused to be made in Briteyn of tymber, a Closure for a towne made like a parke, that when they had taken lande in Englannde, to close in their fiedle to lodge therein with more ease and safetie. And whensocver they shulde remove their fiedle, the Closure was so made, that

\* Landreau autrefois Port de France dans la Riviere de Brest, à 15 miles au deçàs de cette ville. Les Vaiffeaux de Guerre de ce tems là pouvoient aller jusqu'à Landreau.

that they might take it asunder in pieces, - and a great number of carpenters and others were retayned in wages to attend therupon. And who soever at that tyme had beene at Bruges, at Dan, or at Scluse, and had seene the businesse that there was in chargyng and ladyng of shippes with haye, sackyng of bisket, and ladyng of onyons, peason, beanes, barley, candelles, hose, shooes, spurres, knyves, daggers, swordes, targettes, axes, mattockes, nayles of all sortes, wymbles, beddes, cowches, torchies, piche, tarre, cables, ankers, shot-powder, ordinaunce, armor, and all other thinges necessarye that might be thought upon, as bootes, clokes, brydles, scalyng ladders, and a number of thinges more that I cannot reherce. Whosoever (sayth Froissart) that had bene there and had seene it, although he had bene right sore sicke, yet it woulde have made him to have forgotten both hys disease and paine. The lustie yonkers of Fraunce talking among themselves had almost none other talke, nor made none other accompt, but that the Realme of Englande shoulde have becne utterly spoyled and destroyed for ever and ever, without all mercie and recoverie. Of this great preparation and provisyon the king of Englande and his counsayle were well informed, and the king was certainlye assyured that the French king would come into Englande, for so had he and his nobles sworne. And although at the first heryng of thys wonderfull great provisyon, it dyd somewhat abashe the Englishmen, which was

was no greate marvayle. For as the matter of it selfe was very great, so the same was reported to be ten times much more then it was. The erle Richard Arondell and syr Henry Spencer were ordeyned to keepe the sea with 40 great shippes well furnished and trimmed with the number of 300 men of armes and 600 archers. The provissons that were made at thys seafon at Dan and at Sluce it is not had in remembrance of man, neyther in wryting was ever the lyke seene or read, of the charges of this provision, for gold and silver was as fast spent by the French king as though it had reigned out of the cloudes, or that it had come out of the forme and skomme of the sea.—The French king himselfe, as yong as he was, had more minde and desyre to this journey into England, then any other, and so he shewed himselfe alwayes to the ende thereof. And nowe to go forward, every man helped to make provision for other, and to garnishe and bewtifie their shippes, and to paynt them with their armes, and to advance and make them a glorious shewe to the whole worlde. And as it is before sayd, all that had been rehersed, and whatsoever else was done in France concerning the advauncement of this jorney was well knownen in Englande, which brought some feare among them, and therefore they caused dyvers generall processions to be made in every good towne and citie thrce times in the weeke, wherin prayer was made with fervent spirite and devocion unto almighty God to be their Protetour and shielde against their enimies, and the perill that the realme was then in.

And

And yet notwithstanding, there were in Englande at that tyme more than a hundredth thousand that hartely wished and desyred that the Frenchmen myght arryve in Englande. And those lustie young laddes, as triumphyng among themselves and their companions would say, let these Frenchmen come, there shall not one tayle of them returne agayne into Fraunce. And suche as were in debt and cared not for the payment thereof, they, rejoising greatly at the comming of the Frenchmen, woulde saye to their creditors when they demaunded their debt of them; Sirs, be you pacient a little and beare wyth us, for they forge in Fraunce newe floreyns wherewith ye shall be payde. And in trust thereof they lyved and spent very largely. And when they coulde not be credited, they woulde saye, what woulde ye have of us? it were better for you that we shoulde spende freely the gooddes of this realme, rather then the Frenchmen comming hether should finde and consume the same. The earle of Sarisbury, who was a right valiant and prudent knight, sayde before the king and hys uncles, and before all the lords and prelates of England that were present in counsayle. Sir, my sovereigne lord, and all ye my lords and other, it ought not to be marveyled at if our adversary the French king doe come and runne upon us, for sithen the death of our late sovereigne king Edward, this noble realme of England hath beene in great hazard and adventure to have beene lost and destroyed even with the lewde and naughtie people brought up and nourished in the same, which thing is not hidden from Fraunce, and that whiche is worse, it is well knowyne

knowne that we among oureselves are not in perfite love and unite, and that maketh our enemy so bolde. And hereunto I will spesually direct my speeche, to move and exhort that peace, unitie, and love may be had amongst oureselves, and THAT beying first had and faithfully and lovyngly graunted of every of us, we shall the better devyse the resistaunce and withstandingy of our foreyn enimies. Nowe when the earle of Sarisbury had ended his tale, there was no replie made, but with one voice they consented to enter into devises for defence. And whereas the taxes and tallages were great in Fraunce : in like wise at that time they were great in Englande, so that the realme felt great grieve thereof \*.

There were at that time ready in England for defense, of good fighting men, a hundred thousand archers and ten thousand men of armes. Nowe the tyme approached, that every man beganne in Fraunce to set forwarde crying and saiying, Now let us go on these cursed Englishemen who have done so many mischieves and wickednesse in Fraunce the tyme is at hande, that we shall be revenged upon them for the death of our fathers, brethren and kinsmen whome they have cruelly slain and discomfited.

\* Many a man sorowed longe after, but by cause the Commons sawe it was nedfull, fayde, it is not agaynst treason thoghe we be taxed nowe, and so gyve of our goodes to knyghtes and squyeres to defend their herytages and oys. Ther was raysed the same tyme in England for the defence of the country more than two millions of Floreyns.

Froissart.

Then

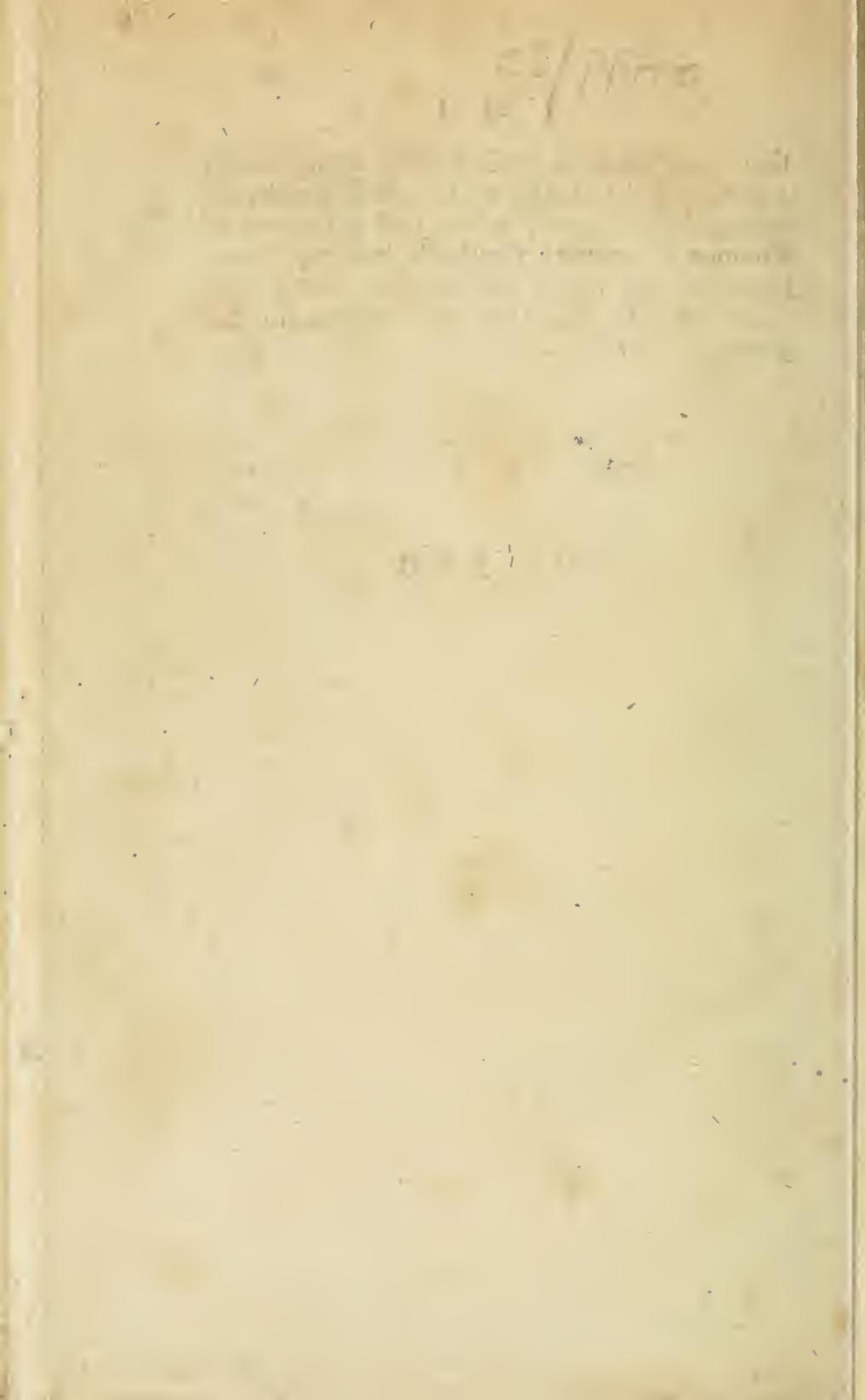
Then the Frenche king came to Arfas, and daily there came downe people from all partes, in such great numbers that the countrie was almost eaten up. And to say truth, nothing remayned in the countrie, but it was taken from them, without making any payment for the same. So that the poor Comons that had gathered together their cornes, had nothing left them but strawe, and that also was taken from them, and if they made any complaint thereof, they were eyther beaten or slaine. These pondes were fished, there houses beaten downe for fyre wood: so that if the Englishe men had arrived in that countrie, they could have done them no more hurt—neyther was it likely that they would have done so much hurt unto them as the Frenchmen did.

And when the poore pitifully called upon them for some amends, they answered, as nowe we have no silver to pay, but when we returne we will bring inough, and then every thing shall be fully aunswere and payde. *But when the poore people sawe their goodes thus taken away and spent, and they durst not complaine thereof, they cursed them between their teeth, saying; Get ye into England, or to the Devill, and God graunt that ye never returne againe.* The Frenche king came nowe to Lisse in Flaundrys, and the report was, that there should passe into England twenty thousand knightes and squires, twenty thousand crossbowes, and twenty thousand of other men of warre, which were persons that should enter into

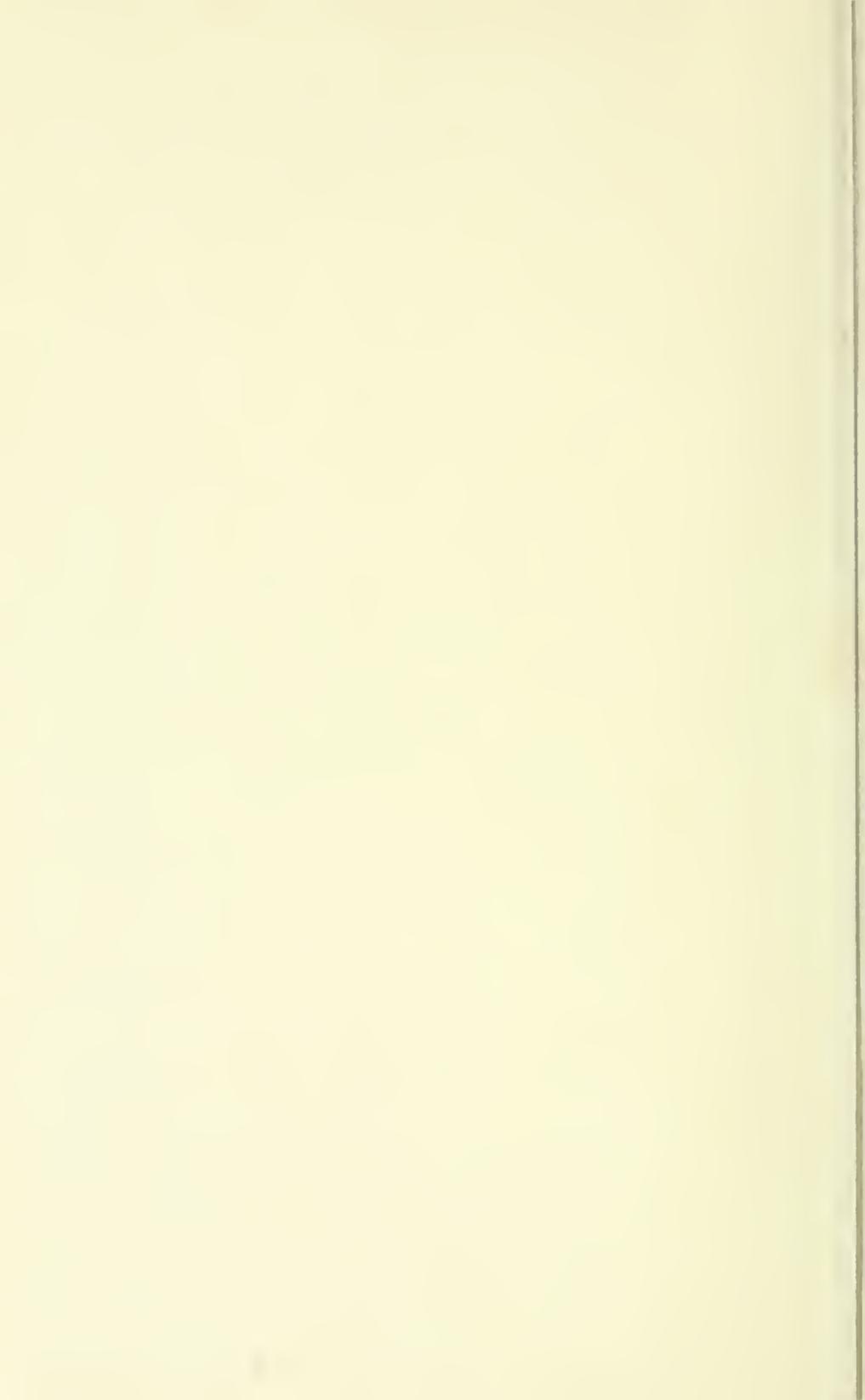
into England, and remaine in the fildē, beſyde all the full furniture of the whole navie upon the ſea. Sir Oliver Clifſon was in Britteyn and was appoynted to bring with him the Cloſure of the fildē made of tymber, whercof mencion is made before. And with the fayde Sir Oliver Clifſon, Counſtable of Fraunce, ſhould come out of Britteyn the beſt knightes and ſquires therein, for it was the Conſtable's purpoſe and entent, that no man ſhoulde enter into Englande without he were a man of armes choſen. And he gave charge to the Admirall ſaying: take hede that ye charge not our ſhippes with Verlettes and Boies, for they ſhall do more hurt than proſite; and they ordeyned all theyr buſineſſe in ſo good order, that dyverſe were of that opinion, that if they miſt arrive altogether in England, whereas they entended to lande (and that was at Orwell Haven) howe that they ſhoulde have put the countrie in greate feare, and ſo they ſhoulde have done without all doubt. For the great lordes, both ſpirituall and temporall, and the people of the good townes of England were in great doubt: But the commons and poore people made ſmall accompt thereof, no more did the pore gentlemen, for they defyred the warre, eyther to leafe or to winne all. And they fayde one to another, I truſt God hath ſent us a good tyme, for that the French king will come into this countrie, he ſheweth himſelfe to be of a valiant couraſe, and we haue not heard of three hundredth yeres paſt of a French king of like couraſe,

courage, but he doth it to make his fouldiers good men of warre: and we thanke him that he will thus visite us, for nowe we shall attaine to some riches, or else shortly make an ende of our lyves. Nowe the Frenche kinge came downe to Lisle, to shewe that the jorney pleased him, and to come the neerer to his passage. And yet all this time the duke of Berry was behinde, and came fayre and softly, for he had no great appetite to thys journey of going into England: But his long taryeng was very displeasant unto the king and to the duke of Burgoyn and to the other lordes, for they would fayne have bene gone. Still great provision was made, which was very costly and dere unto them, for that which was not woorth two shyllings, they payd *ten* shyllings, and yet they woulde nedes have it, for every man defyred to be well furnished, in maner of an envie that everie man defyred to be better appointed than other. And though the gteat lordes were well payde their wages, other poore felowes bought the bargayne full dere, for some had owing unto them for a moneth's wages, and yet coulde get nothing. *The treasurer of the warres and clerkes of the chamber of accompis sayde, Sirs, content you untill the next weeke, and then ye shall be payde, and so they were aunswerced weekly. And if any payment were made unto them, it was but for eyght dayes, when they were owing eyght weeke. So that some of the wiser sorte, when they sawe this manner of dialyng, and howe they were so evill payde, they were much offended,* and

and sayde, this voyage will be of small effect: for it is most lykely, or at least to be greatly suspe&t, that so soone as the money is collected and gathered of suche taxes as were set, that then they will breake this jorney and retorne home agayne into their awne countreyes, and those which cast these doubts, and provided for themselves, were wise. And dyvers lordes resorted to the king at Scluse, to knowe when they shold depart. And ever it was sayde unto them, that within three or foure dayes, or when the duke of Berry doth come, and also that we have winde to serve us. And thus ever the time passed, and the dayes shortened, and the yere beganne to waxe foule, and colde, and the nightes long, the whiche expence and losse of time muche greeved and offendeth the lordes, for that their charges were great and their victualles much diminished. The duke of Berry toke his leave at Paris, and sayde, that he would never enter there again untill he had bene in England, although it appered that he thought nothing lesse. And in thys tyme the Constable of Fraunce departed from Lentringer, standyng on the sea side in Briteine. He had 72 great shippes, and he had with him the Closure of the fielde made of tymber. And they had good winde at the begynnyng: But, when they approched neere to Englannde, the winde rose so fiercely, and was so tempestuous, about the entrie of Mer-gate, and the Thamys mouth, that their shippes were scattered, so that 20 kept not together,















4/16/E

